

The mission of the Fire Department is to minimize the loss of life and property resulting from fires, medical emergencies and other disasters through prevention, education and fire suppression activities.

Overview

The Department provides fire suppression and emergency response from 18 stations strategically located throughout Wichita. The Department is organized into two Divisions: Operations and Administration.

In addition to administrative staff officed at City Hall, the Department operates a training facility. On average, 18 recruits are trained annually, as well as continuously refreshing and updating the training and preparedness of all fire suppression staff. Maintenance of fire apparatus is coordinated through a central maintenance facility, managed by the Public Works Department.

The Department maintains a four-member Arson Investigation unit, which investigates all suspicious fires. Arson investigators also assist in the inspection function, along with three other inspector positions. Three additional positions are dedicated to public education and prevention.

Finance and Operations

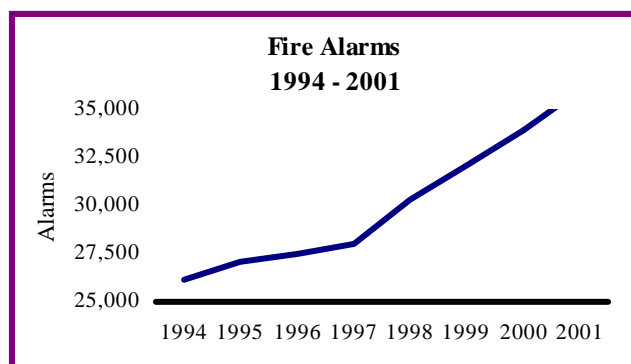
The operating budget for the Fire Department is financed entirely from the General Fund. During this budget period, the Fire Department will begin a series of staffing enhancements, directly tied to the nine-year station relocation project approved by the City Council in 2000. The enhancements include ten new positions in 2002 and 17 more in 2003.

In the 2001 ñ 2010 CIP, \$14.5 million is included to comprehensively relocate fire stations, and to construct two new stations. The moves will allow the Fire Department to adequately service newly annexed areas, while enhancing the responsiveness to existing citizens. Over 30 years, the capital investment in station relocation and construction is expected to save over \$30 million in operating costs.

The relocation of six stations is projected in 2002 and 2003, with a new station projected to open in mid ñ 2003. Seventeen additional fire suppression staff are included in the 2003 Budget to staff the new station. In the future, 17 additional firefighters will be required in 2007 with the addition of another new station.

The Fire Operations budget includes nearly \$22 million for wages for the 360 front line firefighters who provide 24-hour emergency response to City residents from a network of 18 stations. Firefighters respond to over 36,000 alarms each year, including 1,800 fires and almost 23,200 medical alarms. In recent years, alarm volume has increased significantly, primarily in the area of medical calls.

Fire Operations. The majority of the Fire Department resources are focused on fire suppression and medical response activities. The services are provided by fire staff located at stations throughout Wichita. Currently, there are 18 stations, with additional stations planned in 2003 and 2007. In addition, the strategic relocation of eight stations will provide optimum response time. Each station is generally staffed with five firefighters



and two pieces of equipment, a quick response vehicle and a fire engine. At battalion stations, additional fire engines are staffed. Aerials and tenders are available at five stations. Three Battalion Chiefs provide direct supervision to Operations staff.



Fire suppression staff respond to over 1,550 fires annually, approximately 90 percent of which are confined to the room of origin.

Performance of the fire suppression staff is measured in a variety of ways. Response time is maintained at a reasonable level through the number and location of stations, and by fully staffing fire stations. Funding for overtime and holiday pay is necessary based upon the current number of positions needed to staff 18 stations 24 hours a day. The budget includes over \$1.1 million for overtime and holiday pay.

Fire suppression staff are actively involved in the neighborhoods surrounding the stations. Staff often provide station tours, give safety presentations and participate in neighborhood block parties. As part of a neighborhood outreach effort, free blood pressure screenings are provided and firefighters often are invited to and participate in neighborhood events.

The Fire Department maintains a hazardous materials team and specialty rescue teams, including a heavy rescue team, a high angle rescue team and a water rescue team. In recent years, events such as the DeBruce Elevator explosion, the Baby Jesse well rescue, the tornados of the recent past years, and the West Wichita floods have highlighted a need for enhanced rescue equipment and training. The needs have been addressed by earmarking equipment replacement funds for rescue team needs. In addition, a new heavy rescue vehicle has been purchased and will be delivered in the fall of 2002.

While response time is important, appropriate and well-maintained equipment is also necessary to improve the percentage of fires contained to room of origin, and the average dollar loss per fire. The budget continues the initiative to replace hoses and nozzles on a ten-year replacement program to ensure reliability. The budget also continues the ladder replacement program, in which all of the Department's field ladders will be modernized. Recently, the department's breathing apparatus was upgraded with new equipment designed to enhance safety for fire suppression staff. The cost of these upgrades was partially offset by \$151,395 in federal grant funds.

The budget includes funding in 2003 for ten additional firefighters to enhance the staffing of fire equipment. Specifically, the additional positions will enable the staffing of four aerial companies in lieu of the current practice of cross-staffing aerials with squad crews. As a component of the fire station relocation and the consultant's report, it was recommended that aerials be staffed full time. With additional staffing dedicated to the aerials, response times for these apparatus will improve. Aerial apparatus are typically dispatched to

Selected Performance Measures - Operations				
	2000	2001	2002	2003
Average response time (min)	4.24	4.03	4.00	4.00
Percent of fires contained to room of origin	95%	90%	90%	90%
Average dollar loss per fire in thousands	\$6.50	\$4.25	\$4.25	\$4.25
Number of blood pressure screenings	12,248	14,138	15,000	15,000

large fires, including building fires.

Maintenance. The Fire Department operates a fleet of 53 apparatus and various support vehicles. In 2002, the responsibility for maintaining this equipment was transferred from Fire to Public Works in Central Maintenance Facility. Smaller compact sedans have continuously been maintained by Central Maintenance Facility. Fire apparatus maintenance, under the direction of Public Works, is performed in a Fire Maintenance facility centrally located near downtown.



Fire apparatus, including a squad truck and aerial, on the scene of a two-alarm structure fire.

The Fire Building Maintenance section was streamlined in 2001 with the transfer of one position from Fire to Public Works. In addition, fire hydrant maintenance was consolidated within the Water Department, resulting in the transfer of one position from the Fire Department to the Water Department. On-duty firefighters continue to support both activities.

Arson Investigation. Four investigator positions are budgeted at a cost of over \$260,000, including one Captain and three Lieutenants. The positions are scheduled to provide on-duty coverage, primarily during daylight hours. Annually Arson staff investigate approximately 300 fires and make about 30 arrests. In the past, the conviction rate for cases tried has been over 90 percent. Each arson investigator determines causation of 70 fires annually on average and makes an average of nine arrests annually.

Safety and Training. Six positions (five commissioned) attached to Fire Operations perform safety officer and training functions for the Department. The positions include three Captains on 24-hour shifts and three 40-hour employees. Safety Officers are dispatched to every fire and major accident, and direct the response of fire crews to ensure firefighter safety. One position is dedicated to airpack and other equipment maintenance and certification, while another coordinates medical training and quality control. In addition, the safety and training staff are responsible for fire recruit training and for developing drill training. In 2001, safety and training staff were consolidated at Station One.

Fire Prevention. The budget funds nine positions dedicated to public education and inspections functions. Inspection duties include high hazard occupancies, high rise buildings, health care and day care facilities, schools, hospitals and grain elevators. This section also monitors burn permits, inspects applicants for

liquor licenses, and ensures citizen safety at events including fireworks displays and concerts. Fire Operations staff heavily supplement the inspection function, performing over 80 percent of the inspections.

Public Education staff conduct fire safety and prevention training in

Selected Performance Measures - Arson				
	2000	2001	2002	2003
Fires determined to be of suspicious nature	94	108	110	110
Fires investigated	276	287	300	300
Fires investigated per investigator per year	69	72	75	75
Arrests	22	36	25	25
Conviction rate	90%	90%	100%	100%
Arrests per investigator per year	5.50	9.00	6.25	6.25

addition to inspections on properties requiring state certification. Staff develop programs to assist large corporations in emergency evacuation procedures, and assist in training for Operations Division staff. The public education role is supplemented by Operations staff with station tours, smoke detector installation and other activities.

Selected Performance Measures - Prevention

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Fires per 1,000 pop.	5.08	4.34	4.20	4.20
Building inspections	3,710	3,234	3,300	3,300

In 2000, three positions were shifted from Fire to OCI to enhance the efficiency of this area. These staff coordinate with inspectors from the Office of Central Inspection to review plans related to fire suppression systems, fire alarm systems, fire apparatus access, and water supply analysis. In addition, plans review for special occupancies including hazardous waste facilities and chemical storage areas are performed in coordination with OCI. As commissioned positions performing this role separate from service, these tasks will be integrated into the workload of OCI Inspectors.

Administration. The Fire Chief and six civilian personnel handle the administrative oversight of the department. A civilian Assistant to the Chief is responsible for monitoring budgetary compliance, purchasing, soliciting grants, supervising payroll functions and providing general support to the Chief. The administration of the Firehouse software system is performed in the Operations section, with support from the staff of Information Technology. Firehouse was implemented in 2000, replacing an antiquated system used to log alarm call information. The new system has the capability to integrate call data, fleet maintenance and inspection data into one centralized system.

Highlights

- ✓ Twenty seven additional firefighters will be added in 2003, to staff new stations and additional equipment
- ✓ One new station will open in 2003, and six others will be relocated in 2002 ñ 2003 to minimize response times.
- ✓ One Account Clerk III position is deleted in 2003.

Fire Department Budget Summary

	2001 Actual	2002 Adopted	2002 Revised	2003 Adopted	2004 Approved
Personal Services	22,064,694	23,683,650	22,997,090	24,530,060	26,110,890
Contractual Services	1,030,099	1,113,680	1,551,120	1,525,870	1,529,970
Commodities	596,443	606,420	606,655	505,610	482,430
Capital Outlay	38,854	48,220	40,100	40,100	40,100
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total General Fund Expenditures	23,730,090	25,451,970	25,194,965	26,601,640	28,163,390
FEMA - Assistance to Firefighters	0	0	151,935	0	0
General Fund	23,730,090	25,451,970	25,043,030	26,601,640	28,163,390
Total Fire Department Resources	23,730,090	25,451,970	25,194,965	26,601,640	28,163,390
Total commissioned positions	370	380	380	397	397
Total civilian positions	13	13	8	7	7
Total FTE positions	383	393	388	404	404